

REMARKS

Claim 21 is cancelled. Claims 33-35 have been added. Therefore, claims 22-28 and 33-35 remain pending in this application.

In the pending Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 21-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,350,480 to Gray. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. The claimed invention includes a ClF_3 supplier for supplying ClF_3 gas to the processing vessel, a promoter for promoting adhesion of ClF_3 gas to a surface of the object, an evacuator for evacuating ClF_3 gas from the processing vessel, and an activator for activating ClF_3 adhered to the surface of the object. Removal of oxide formed on the surface of the object is achieved using only the ClF_3 gas adhered to the surface of the object.

Gray's disclosed device cannot remove oxide from the surface of an object using ClF_3 adhered to the surface of the object. Further, claim 22 specifically recites a promoter for promoting adhesion of ClF_3 gas to the object to be processed. Although the Examiner asserts that Gray's substrate temperature control (36 in Figure 1) promotes adhesion of ClF_3 gas, that fact is not disclosed by Gray. With regard to the substrate temperature control, Gray states only that it heats the substrate 34 to control its temperature during the etching process and to allow rapid thermal heating after processing to volatilize and remove contaminants and corrosive compounds. See column 8, lines 39-51. Thus, Gray does not disclose promoting adhesion of ClF_3 gas to the object. Because Gray's disclosed device cannot remove oxide from the surface of an object using the ClF_3 adhered to the surface of the object, and because Gray does not disclose a promoter as claimed in claim 22, Gray cannot anticipate claim 22. The

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rejection of claim 22 should therefore be withdrawn. Because claims 23-28 and 35 depend directly or indirectly from allowable claim 22, they are also allowable over Gray.

New independent claims 33 and 34 are allowable over the prior art of record in this application.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

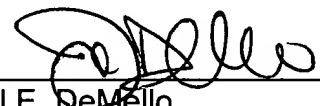
Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____


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